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ART. VI. — *Hernani, ou l'Honneur Castillan.* 2. *Marion de Lorme.* 3. *Le Roi s'amuse.* Drame. Par VICTOR HUGO. Paris. 1835.

“THE public mind,” says M. Victor Hugo, in his Preface to *Marion de Lorme*, “has never been in a better state, never more enlightened and more sober, than at the present moment.” We think all but Frenchmen will agree with us, that this passage, written by any but a Frenchman, would naturally be accepted as ironical. M. Hugo is, however, in very profound earnest; and we can only regret that we differ from him so entirely. Our reasons for so doing are, simply, the moral and intellectual state of France, as exhibited in the proceedings and condition of governors and governed alike, the want of proper principles of public action on the part of those in power, the total absence of every thing like consistency on the part of the people; and further, (we regret to draw so different a conclusion, from the very grounds, whence, probably, M. Hugo derived his flattering opinion of the “public mind,”) the depraved condition of literature in France, and the extreme popularity which works such as those of M. Hugo have obtained there. This gentleman appears to us to embody most entirely, in his intellectual being, the vices and virtues by which his country is at this moment possessed. *Possessed* is the word; for the very good which struggles and strives, and will ultimately prevail, through the tumultuous tossings of opinions, forms, governments, and creeds in that land, is, in its vehement and inarticulate urgings, more like a possessing, than a guiding, or governing spirit. M. Hugo’s works are already numerous, and additions to them are daily announced as in the press; they are full, as we said before, of the virtues and vices of his time and place, yet in some measure he is before his time, and above his place. His popularity and his influence are alike great with his countrymen; and his is decidedly the mind, which exercises the most power at this moment over the French literary world.

His writings, which are all conceived in a truly republican spirit, are calculated to increase the breach between old forms and new ideas; and such of them as are apparently the most purely imaginative, contain sentiments and expressions of ultra-liberalism on all political subjects, which seldom fail

of being aptly applied to existing circumstances. This has rendered him an object of distrust and apprehension to the government, and more than once subjected the exhibition of his plays to vexatious and arbitrary suspension.

The French writers of the last years of the revolution derived the more spiritual tone of their works from the influence which the intellectual resurrection of Germany was beginning to exercise over the literature of Europe. The French authors of the last twenty years, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Delavigne, and their imitators, have drawn some portion of their characteristic qualities from the English cotemporary writers, Moore and Byron, whose popularity in France, has had no small share in the formation and growth of the *Ecole Romantique*. M. Hugo persuades himself, that he is inspired with some measure of knowledge and feeling of Shakspeare. This were indeed at once a merit and an infinite reward ; and for M. Hugo's sake we heartily wish it may be so ; but, without wishing to appear skeptical as to the possibility of a Frenchman's understanding Shakspeare, we will only say, that should M. Hugo proceed in his study of that greatest mind, we hope he will hereafter arrive at some perception of the divine and undeviating morality which pervades those wonderful works. Not the cramped and sickly morality of words, or forms, or schools ; but the same unerring, unobscured morality, which lies upon the wide surface of the universe ; which is wrought out in every single thread of human existence, which is for ever and for ever multiplying its evidence for our teaching, through the hourly lessons of life ; which, in the inner and spiritual world, bears witness to the truth and justice of God, our Maker, as, in the outer and visible creation, an all-pervading beauty reveals his mercy and his might.

At present, M. Hugo is far indeed from any such knowledge ; and the first sin with which we have to charge him, is the moral darkness in which his mental conceptions are enveloped. There is indeed an occasional struggling after the truth, a groping as it were in search of higher things, devoted love, chivalrous honor, a noble indignation at all oppressions ; these plead eloquently, in his impassioned language, his claim to our respect and sympathy. But these are but momentary visitations of his better angel ; his most frequent conceptions are dark, deformed, and painfully destitute of a sane spirit.

M. Hugo's ideas of right and wrong have a decided *twist*; and he forcibly reminds us of the poor gentleman, who on his death-bed sending for a clergyman, the latter, after spending infinite time and pains in discoursing to him, abruptly took his leave, assuring the dying man that his moral perceptions were in such a state of inextricable confusion, that he did not know "where to begin with him." Had M. Hugo been a professor of Byronism, all this would have surprised us less; but, in a man who reads (and understands?) Shakspeare, this blunted and imperfect sense of truth is, to say the least, curious.

Our next quarrel with M. Hugo is upon the score of his extravagance; and here we must complain, not only of his conceptions, but of their execution. He has quite power enough not to be violent; and, by the by, we do wish somebody would convince the times, that power and violence are not one and the same thing. They are no more so, than the words are synonymous; nobody confounds the two words, but there is a fatal and very general confounding of the two things. "A powerful book" has become a regular hack encomium, bestowed by every friendly reviewer, upon every other of the modern night-mares with which literature has been adorned; till of late years it has become like an endless temptation of St. Anthony, or Dance of Death; each succeeding publication surpassing its predecessor in grotesque absurdity and hideous extravagance. Now, a really powerful book is really an uncommon thing; and as for the majority of those which are so called by courtesy, we should say, that, far from indicating strength, they betrayed evident tokens of such mental weakness, as to render it very doubtful whether or not the authors were in possession of their senses at the time of composing them. Such delineations of human character are brought before us daily, by these *powerful* writers, as remind us of nothing in the world, but the distorted and fantastical imitations of human forms, which might be found on the walls of a madman's cell. These good authors all seem to us to be in a phrensy; and we should as soon think of admiring the vigor of their intellectual *lunes*, as we should commend, as an exhibition of wholesome strength, the frantic exertions of some feverish wretch, who required three men to hold him.

Now M. Hugo has very strong *fits* occasionally. He

betrays a want of intellectual self-possession, an absence of sobriety, a lack of power to govern his own strength, which is by no means like a great master. He appears to excite himself while exciting his reader, and the consequence is, that his work is like a real piece of madness, compared with a fine representation of it. He gets astride upon his fancy, like his own Quasimodo on the great bell of Notre Dame, and swings away, till the whirl, and the din, and the dizziness of his mental belfry bid fair to outvie that of the Hunchback, and to leave its occupant with as few wits at the end of these outrageous intellectual exercises.

Up to a certain point, the excitement created by fine and vigorous works of art is good ; not only a pleasurable stimulus in itself, but necessary, as deepening the after impression, which their spiritual meaning should make upon us, and in which consists their subtler and more divine essence. But these emotions must be kept within some bounds ; nor must the higher end be lost sight of, in the means employed to attain it ; or else the work becomes a poisonous fire-draught instead of a wholesome stimulant, creating phrensy instead of renovation, and leaving feebleness instead of health and vigor. The invisible guardians of the magic ring, into which we enter while under the spell of a great master, are truth, the moral sense of good and evil, a sound judgment, and a pure taste. These must encircle alike the magician and those who are beholding his incantation. The charmed bounds once passed, they both fall under the influence of the spell they have used, and the spirits they have invoked ; and the oracles of genius, instead of coming clear and high and solemn to the ear and heart of the listener, will be uttered like the ravings of the Pytho-ness, amid the frantic convulsions of one possessed with an infernal spirit, not possessing a divine one.

We have another strong general objection to make against M. Hugo's works, — his women. What is the reason that he invariably makes such naughty women his heroines ? In almost every one of his compositions, we are brought into company with ladies whose principles are so very lax, that, in spite of M. Hugo's assertion that his plays are moral, we cannot help thinking that they have very little chance of remaining so, unless he cuts out all his

female characters ; they are enough to corrupt all the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. Such of his heroines, as are the daughters of his fancy, are by no means so correct as we should like our daughters to be, and his historical selections are yet more unfortunate ; — Lucretia Borgia, Marion de Lorme ; why not Nell Gwynn, why not Ninon de L'Enclos ? The catastrophe which winds up the career of the latter, is altogether a subject after M. Hugo's taste ; we wonder it has hitherto escaped being made into a *moral play* by him. We recommend to him, among the other peculiarities of Shakspeare, to meditate upon his female characters ; and to learn under what aspects it is, that a woman claims our sympathy, our love, our admiration, and our veneration ; and he will not then write books which no honest man or woman can read without indignation at the libels on female nature, which he has thought fit to perpetrate in them.

As no society can be pure, in which the women are not chaste and holy, so no book can be moral, in which the delineations of female character are vicious. In spite, therefore, of M. Hugo's assertion, and of the precision with which he has squared out the moral of *Le Roi s'amuse*, as an illustration of that assertion, we beg to assure him that his books are immoral ; for his women are worthless, and that is enough.

We have less fault to find with the execution of these works, than with the spirit in which they are conceived. M. Hugo has abundance of ability ; pity it is so ill employed. His style is vigorous, startling, and effective ; but his power wants repose, his contrasts are often harsh and unmellow, and his effects are frequently theatrical. We do not now speak of those dramatic situations, which are essentially good, only in proportion as they are theatrically effective. These M. Hugo conceives powerfully, and introduces skillfully. But his language, his feelings, his spirit, is theatrical, (not dramatic ;) his very thoughts attitudinize, and we object to that ; it is however a national defect, and to expect him to be entirely free from it, were unjust and unreasonable. It is no small merit, that he has succeeded in rendering the cramped versification, to which his language condemns him, so natural and so pathetic. Poetical it never can be ; but it is an unspeakable relief to

have got down from the stilts of the dramatic jargon of Louis the Fourteenth's time. M. Hugo, to be sure, goes to the other extreme ; and if the muse of Racine and Corneille wore high heels, powder, and a hoop, his Melpomene, on the other hand, runs dishevelled, and slipshod to boot ; which is not altogether so well. It is to be hoped, that the golden mean will be discovered ere long.

The prefaces of *Marion de Lorme*, and *Le Roi s'amuse*, contain some curious politico-literary facts ; which exhibit in a striking light the want of principle, since more openly manifested, in the tyrannical restraints imposed by the French government upon the freedom of the press ; and also place M. Hugo's own character in a favorable point of view, of which, we are happy to say, he seems fully aware. If conscientious self-approbation be a blessing, M. Hugo seems highly blessed. We believe him to be an honest man, *in spite* of his asserting it so energetically himself.

The play of *Marion de Lorme* was written in 1829, but, submitted to the revision of the *censure*, was vetoed, and remained a forbidden thing, until the "admirable revolution" (as M. Hugo styles it) of 1830 let loose upon the public, as the first-fruits of its beneficence, the torrent of obnoxious matter, which had been accumulating in the receptacles of the *censure*.

At this juncture, M. Hugo was vehemently solicited to bring out his piece ; but, unwilling to base the popularity of his work upon a momentary political excitement, he very prudently declined producing it then.

M. Hugo had, it seems, on the accession of Charles the Tenth, in a fit of enthusiasm for a monarch who exclaimed against literary censorship, indited a royal *canton* in praise of said liberal monarch. Recollecting this, at the time when the revolution of the Three Days had civilly dispensed with the royal services of Charles, he, from a motive of delicacy, forbore celebrating the triumph of the people by the enacting of his long-forbidden piece ; not choosing, to use his own words, "to be one of the vents by which the public anger should exhale itself." Of his merit in this proceeding, as of his merits generally, as we before observed, M. Victor Hugo appears to enjoy a comfortable conviction. A more appropriate occasion, in his opinion, offering, he produced his play, which, like all

his other performances, was rapturously received by his admiring countrymen, we will presently see how deservedly.

It seems that *Marion de Lorme* was written before *Hernani*, although the latter piece, not falling under the disapprobation of the *censure*, was represented upwards of a year previous to the production of the other. To these succeeded *Le Roi s'amuse*, written in 1832, produced at the Théâtre Français, and, on the day after its first appearance, withdrawn by order of the government on the score of its immorality.

The indignation of the author, though very natural, was quite ineffectual in restoring his piece to the honors of public exhibition; and the preface, which he published with it, contained a statement of facts, which became his sole mode of appeal to the "enlightened public mind." In this preface, we find some curious passages; the following, for instance;—M. Hugo is speaking of the prohibition of his play;—"And who is it that this tyrannical exercise of power has singled out to attack? an author, [the gentleman means himself] so situated, that if his talents are doubtful, his character is not; an honest man; one professed, demonstrated, and proved to be such; a venerable and rare thing, in these times." There follows a whole page of self-consolation much in the same style; and we really feel the less hesitation in offering any criticisms upon M. Hugo's works, that he seems so cased in proof-panoply of self-esteem, that we should think he was invulnerable to all shafts of censure.

A little further on, he assigns as the *real* reason of the interdiction of his piece, a certain line in the third act, (we are sorry that our knowledge of court scandal does not enable us to indicate it to the reader,) which it seems may be construed into no very flattering allusion to Louis Philippe. At the same time that the author disclaims all intention of making such allusion, forbearing even now to proclaim the offensive sentence, which, thus quoted, it seems, would immediately suggest its own application, he holds the revelation *in terrorem* over the refractory monarch, who, professing to be a *republican people's king*, has thought proper to give himself the despotic airs of a king of the old school.

We cannot here forbear remarking, that, bitter as is the disappointment of M. Hugo and his fellow liberals, on

finding that the leopard has not changed his spots, nor the Ethiop his skin, none but Frenchmen would ever have conceived that monstrous anomaly, a republican king ; or have selected a Bourbon to form the head-piece of their political Centaur ; or imagined that the "three glorious days," though sufficient to regenerate all France, could also suffice to change the blood in the veins of a son of the old dynasty.

Let us hear M. Hugo's own opinion of this government and its proceedings ; we quote from the preface of *Le Roi s'amuse*. After speaking of the apparent indolence which has succeeded the great liberty fever of 1830, he says ;

"In our opinion, the government is taking unfair advantage of the present prevalent inclination to rest, and apprehension of new revolutions. It is exercising petty tyrannies, and it is to blame, both as regards itself and us. If it imagines that the public mind has become indifferent to the idea of liberty, it is mistaken ; the people are merely temporarily exhausted. A severe account will yet be demanded, of all the illegal proceedings which we see accumulating from day to day.

"How far we have retrograded ! Two years ago, public order was threatened ; now, it is our liberty itself that is in jeopardy. Questions of free thought, of intellect, and of art, are arbitrarily silenced by the viziers of the *King of the Barricades*. It is indeed most sad to contemplate the winding-up of the revolution of July ; *mulier formosa supernè !*"

We should be more inclined to agree with M. Hugo about the sadness of the matter, if any other result could reasonably have been anticipated. We wonder what he thinks of the new laws with regard to the press. But it is time to leave his prefaces, and proceed to the plays.

Hernani, the first-written of this precious trio, is by no means so iniquitous in its plot as its successors. Some rays of humanity yet struggle through the improbability of the fable, and the author's fancy is not yet overrun with those diabolical conceptions, with which some of his other works abound, to the dismay of all good Christians and sober-minded creatures who attempt to read them.

The heroine, Donna Sol, is betrothed, according to the not unfrequent practice of Catholic countries, to her uncle Don Ruy de Silva ; but, in the mean time, her affections are engaged

by an unknown cavalier, whom she receives in secret, and who is the chief of a horde of brigands.

It appears that the King of Spain, Charles the Fifth, is also enamoured of her ; and the difficulties of the lady between her three lovers, and the various perils and escapes of *Hernani*, her favored one, take up the first part of the piece. The old Don, however, afraid that he shall die before he gets married, if he does not make haste, carries off his fair niece to one of his strong-holds, and they are on the point of celebrating their nuptials, when the whole castle is thrown into confusion by the arrival of *Hernani*, in the disguise of a pilgrim. Finding his mistress, as he conceives, unfaithful, he immediately proclaims himself as the robber chief, upon whose head a princely price was set ; but the old lord assures him, that if he were the Devil in person, the rights of hospitality would be extended to him, and his life and liberty be secure while under his roof. He leaves the lovers together, not at all suspecting his niece's low-life attachment to the highwayman ; and, presently returning, finds his bride locked in the arms of *Hernani*. The worthy old gentleman's rage then knows no bounds, and he is about to fight with the traitor on the spot, when news is brought that the King is before the castle, in pursuit of *Hernani*. Now, though it does not irk Don Ruy to kill the gentleman who kissed his niece, it is quite against his ideas of propriety, to give up a man who has sought shelter under his roof. He therefore conceals the robber, and stands the brunt of the King's rage unmoved, who, unable either by entreaties, commands, or threats, to obtain the bandit, at length desires the old lord to give up either *Hernani* or his niece, Donna Sol ; upon which, the poor old man, faithful, as he conceives, to the laws of honor, and ignorant of the King's passion for his niece, delivers her up to his Majesty, who departs in peace with his prize. No sooner are they gone, than Don Ruy draws *Hernani* from his place of concealment, and insists upon prosecuting the duel they had begun together ; when, happening to mention the hostage which the King had been pleased to accept, *Hernani*, in despair, informs him of the danger in which he has placed his niece, by surrendering her to the monarch. All other thoughts now give way to the desire of both to recover the young lady ; and, putting aside their animosity for a short time, they agree to assist each other in rescuing Donna Sol from her perilous situation ; *Hernani*

pledging his solemn word to old De Silva, that, that object once accomplished, he will give up his life to his honorable old enemy ; and, in token of this, he gives him his own bugle-horn, telling him, at whatever time and in whatever place he pleases, to sound it, when he (Hernani) will at once surrender himself to his vengeance. This bargain made, they sheathe their swords, shake hands, and set off, the best friends in the world, in pursuit of the lady.

The fourth act consists chiefly of the failure of a conspiracy formed against Charles the Fifth, at that moment elected Emperor, and his magnanimous forgiveness of the conspirators, among whose number are Don Ruy de Silva and Hernani, who, upon this occasion, throws off his assumed character of a bandit, and claims the princely privilege of wearing his hat before the King, being no less a personage than his kinsman, John of Arragon.

The new-made Emperor, however, has no idea of being hard upon any of them ; forgives them all, restores Hernani to his noble rank and princely possessions, and moreover, with infinite generosity, relinquishes all his pretensions to Donna Sol, whom he places safe and sound in her lover's hands. How she came there just then, it is difficult to imagine, the scene being laid before the tomb of Charlemagne in Aix-la-Chapelle. That, however, don't much matter ; the public is not apt to be particular in these points, and, when all ends wells, all *is* well in their sympathetic opinions.

All parties are now satisfied ; the Emperor, with himself and his new dignity, Hernani with his mistress, and she with him. Old De Silva, however, is by no means well pleased at this transfer of his bride, and the fourth act closes with the general joy of the whole company, excepting him alone.

The conclusion is rapid. The fifth act celebrates the marriage feast of Don John of Arragon and Donna Sol. His father's palace has received him again ; and revelry, and mirth, and music fill the scene. At length the gaudier light of pleasure dims, the guests withdraw, and the lovers are left alone in their happiness. At this moment, which, in conception and execution, is by far the most striking of the piece, the fatal horn sounds Hernani's summons, from all his full-blown joys, to death. The old lord De Silva appears, and claims the fulfilment of Hernani's oath. In vain the latter, unmanned by the exceeding bitterness of leaving life when crowned with all

its imaginable blisses, implores a short delay. The stern old man insists upon his right, and presents a vial of poison to the youth. This, however, Donna Sol seizes, and drinking the one half, gives the rest to her husband, both of them presently falling, like stricken flowers, at the feet of the obdurate old noble, who ends the piece by killing himself, and going, as he himself declares, and the reader easily believes, to hell. — The three corpses keep possession of the stage.

All the absurdity of this plot, does not of right belong to M. Hugo ; that is to say, that, exaggerated as we may deem such a very nice sense of honor, it is not unnatural, and, if we may believe old chronicles, was not unusual in Spain, where similar absurdities form the plot of some of their best plays. *La Estrella di Seviglia* of Lope de Vega, where a man kills the brother of his mistress, and almost drives himself and her mad by so doing, simply because the King commands the deed, is, to our republican apprehensions, far more fantastical ; yet the play is an immense favorite in Spain, and the plot is there considered a very rational plot.

Some of the writing in *Hernani* would positively be poetry, if it were not French ; and we think M. Hugo always exceedingly happy in the expression of tenderness and passion. We subjoin some passages, which we quote from Lord Francis Egerton's translation ; which has the advantage of resembling its original in an unusual degree, and is far superior to the miserable imitations of the piece, which have been produced on our stages. The following, spoken by old Don Ruy to Donna Sol, is graceful and touching.

“ When, as I muse my garden glades along,
Some shepherd youth disturbs me with his song,
Whose sound from the green field can reach my bowers,
Thus I apostrophize my crumbling towers ;
‘ My ducal dungeon-keep, my loop-holed wall,
My woods, my harvests, — I would give ye all ;
Would give the fields my swarm of vassals tills, —
Would give my flocks upon a thousand hills, —
Would give the ancestors, who watch intent,
Chiding my slowness, for a son’s descent
Among them, and expect him even now, —
For that same peasant’s hut and youthful brow.
For round that brow, unscored by age’s lines,
The dark locks cluster, and beneath it shines

An eye like thine ; and thou may'st well behold,
 And say, ' That man is young, and this is old.'
 Thus to myself I speak, and speak it true ;
 All, to be young, and fair, and gay as you,
 All would I give. I dream ! — *I* young and gay,
 Who to the tomb am doomed to lead the way !

DONNA SOL.

Who knows ?

DON RUY.

Yet trust not that the youthful tribe
 Can feel the constant love their words describe.
 Let but a lady listen and believe,
 They laugh to see her die, or live to grieve.
 These birds of amorous note and gaudy wing
 Can moult their passions like their plumes in spring ;
 The old, whose notes are tuneless, hues less bright,
 Are steadier to their nest and in their flight.
 Time on our furrowed brow the graver's part
 May play ; he writes no wrinkles on the heart.
 Give to the old the mercy which they need, —
 The heart is always young enough to bleed.
 With all a bridegroom's love, a father's pride,
 I love thee, and a hundred ways beside.
 I love thee as we love the flowers, the skies,
 Earth's breathing perfumes, heaven's enchanting dyes ;
 And when thy step, so graceful yet so free,
 The aspect of that stainless brow, I see,
 That heaven seems opening as I gaze on thee. }

DONNA SOL.

Alas !

DON RUY.

And mark ; the reasoning world approves,
 When towards an honored grave an old man moves,
 If woman deign his useless age to tend,
 And smooth his progress to his journey's end.
 It is an angel's task, and thou shalt be
 That angel, in a woman's form, to me."

The old nobleman's rebuke of Hernani and the King, is spirited ;

" What business brings you here, young cavaliers ?
 Men like the Cid, the knights of by-gone years,

Rode out the battle of the weak to wage,
 Protecting beauty, and revering age.
 Their armour sat on them, strong men as true,
 Much lighter than your velvets sit on you.
 Not in a lady's room by stealth they knelt ;
 In church, by day, they spoke the love they felt.
 They kept their houses' honor bright from rust,
 They told no secret, and betrayed no trust ;
 And if a wife they wanted, bold and gay,
 With lance, or axe, or sword-point, and by day,
 Bravely they won and wore her. As for those
 Who walk the streets when honest men repose,
 With eyes turned to the ground, and in night's shade,
 The rights of trusting husbands to invade ;
 I say the Cid would force such knaves as these
 To beg the city's pardon on their knees.
 And with the flat of his all-conquering blade
 Their rank usurped, and scutcheon, would degrade.
 Thus would the men of former days, I say,
 Treat the degenerate minions of to-day."

The opening of the fifth act, as the revel closes, and *Hernani* and *Donna Sol* are left alone, is beautiful.

"DONNA SOL.

Dearest ! at length they leave us. By yon moon,
 It should be late.

HERNANI.

And can it come too soon,
 The hour that frees us from the listening crowd,
 To breathe our sighs, so long suppressed, aloud ?

DONNA SOL.

The noise disturbed me. Must we not confess,
 Rejoicing stuns the sense of happiness ?

HERNANI.

'T is true ; for happiness is kin to rest,
 And writes its lessons slowly on the breast.
 When busy pleasure strews its path with flowers,
 Or breaks the silence of its quiet bowers,
 It flies ; and if it smile, its smile appears
 Far less allied to laughter than to tears.

* * * * *

* * Why should I bear in mind
 The tattered garments that I leave behind ?

In mourning to my palace I repair,
 An angel of the Lord awaits me there.
 I bid the fallen column's shaft aspire ;
 On my ancestral hearth I light its fire ;
 I ope its casements to the wind, which sports
 'Mid the rank herbage of its grass-grown courts ;
 I weed that herbage from the creviced stone,
 And seat my house's honor on its throne ;
 My King restores me to each ancient right,
 My seat in council, and my crest in fight.
 Come, then, in blushing beauty, come, my bride,
 Lay the sad memory of the past aside ;
 That past is all unsaid, unseen, undone ;
 I start afresh, a glorious course to run.
 I know not if 't is madness fires my breast, —
 I love you, — I possess you, — and am blest !
 * * * * *

DONNA SOL.

One little moment, to indulge the sight
 With the rich beauty of the summer night.
 The harp is silent, and the torch is dim, —
 Night and ourselves together. To the brim
 The cup of our felicity is filled.
 Each sound is mute, each harsh sensation stilled.
 Dost thou not think, that, e'en while nature sleeps,
 Some power its amorous vigils o'er us keeps ?
 No cloud in heaven ; — while all around repose,
 Come taste with me the fragrance of the rose,
 Which loads the night-air with its musky breath,
 While all around is still as nature's death.
 E'en as you spoke, — and gentle words were those
 Spoken by you, — the silver moon uprose ;
 How that mysterious union of her ray,
 With your impassioned accents, made its way
 Straight to my heart ! I could have wished to die
 In that pale moonlight, and while thou wert by.

HERNANI.

Thy words are music, and thy strain of love
 Is borrowed from the choir of heaven above.

DONNA SOL.

Night is too silent, darkness too profound.
 Oh for a star to shine, a voice to sound, —

To raise some sudden strain of music now,
Suited to night!

HERNANI.

Capricious girl! your vow
Was poured for silence, and to be released
From the thronged tumult of the marriage-feast.

DONNA SOL.

Yes; but a bird to carol in the field, —
A nightingale, in moss and shade concealed, —
A distant flute, — for music's stream can roll
To soothe the heart, and harmonize the soul, —
O! 't would be bliss to listen!

(*Sound of a horn in the distance.*)”

We now come to M. Hugo's next dramatic production, *Marion de Lorme*; and here his moral atmosphere is enveloped in a much thicker mist than before, and we lose sight, in a pitiable manner, of the real bearings and relations of things.

Marion de Lorme, the noted courtesan of Louis the Thirteenth's reign, one of the earliest specimens of that tribe of profligate women, whose beauty, talent, and exceeding impudence gave them so much influence in the licentious times that followed the regency of Anne of Austria, is the personage selected by M. Hugo for his heroine.

Having fallen in love with a young man, whom she has met by accident, and who is ignorant of her character, she leaves Paris in disguise, and takes up her abode at Blois, where her lover resides.

For a while their intercourse is happy. Didier, her lover, himself an enthusiastic and noble creature, believes her to be all that his idolatrous affection pictures her; and she, loving for the first time a virtuous nature, is filled at once with admiration and respect for him, horror of her former life, and fear lest he should discover her real name and situation.

We will let him give his own account of himself; and through our most prosaic translation, which has no earthly pretension but that of being *literally* literal, the reader will perceive that M. Hugo has invested his hero with much of the unaccountable gloom and despondency, the bile, in

short, (for we presume, as there is no other assignable cause, it must be that,) of the Byron school.

“ DIDIER.

Hearken to me, Mary.

My name is Didier, I have never known
Father or mother ; naked I was left
An infant on the threshold of a church.
An old and low-born woman, in whose soul
Some pity lived, took me, and tended me.
She was my mother ; — gave me Christian nurture,
And, dying, left me all her worldly heritage,
A yearly stipend of nine hundred livres,
On which I live. Alone, at twenty years,
Life seemed both sad and bitter. I went travelling,
And grew acquainted with my fellow men.
And some of them I hated, more despised,
For on that sullied glass, the human face,
I read but pain, and pride, and misery ;
So that I sat me down, youthful in years
But old in spirit ; of this life as weary,
As they should be who are about to leave it.
I struck 'gainst all things, all things wounded me ;
The world seemed bad to me, and men yet worse.
Thus was I living, gloomy, poor, and lonely,
When first I saw you, and felt comforted.
And yet I do not know you ; — in the street
One night in Paris I beheld you first ;
Then once or twice I met you, and still always
Your looks were gentle, and your speech most kind.
I feared to love you, and I fled ; strange destiny !
Again you meet me here, — my guardian angel !
At length, worn out with love and doubt, I spake,
And you with favor heard. — Yours is my heart,
And yours my life ; what may I do for you ?
Is there on earth the man or thing you hate ?
Have you a wish my soul can buy for you ?
Oh ! do you need one prompt to give his life
Joyfully for you ; — whose heart's blood poured out
Were richly paid, but by one smile of yours ?
Oh ! speak, command, dearest, for here am I !

MARION (*smiling*).

You're strange, and yet I love you thus.

DIDIER.

You love me !

Beware, nor with light lips utter that word.
You love me ! — know you what it is to love
With love that is the life-blood in one's veins,
The vital air we breathe, a love long smothered,
Smouldering in silence, kindling, burning, blazing,
And purifying in its growth the soul.
A love, that from the heart eats every passion
But its sole self ; — love without hope, or limit,
Deep love, that will outlive all happiness ;
Speak, speak, is such the love you bear me ?

MARION.

Truly.

DIDIER.

Oh ! but you do not know how I love you !
The day that first I saw you, the dark world
Grew shining, and your eyes lighted my gloom.
Since then, all things have changed ; to me you are
Some bright and unknown creature from the skies.
This irksome life, 'gainst which my heart rebelled,
Seems almost fair and pleasant ; for, alas !
Till I knew you, wandering, alone, oppressed,
I wept and struggled, I had never loved.

MARION.

Poor Didier ! ”

It happens, however, that a regiment is stationed at Blois, the officers of which have, one or all, been admirers of Marion. One of these young sparks discovers the fair Lais's retreat and disguise, and Marion, to obtain his silence, half confesses the purpose of both. We cannot go into every detail of the piece. Didier and Saverny, the young officer, meet, quarrel, and fight, immediately under a placard, which the Cardinal de Richelieu has had posted up, forbidding duelling, on pain of death to the parties concerned. The city authorities intervene, Saverny pretends to be dead, and is carried off by his friends ; and Didier is conveyed to prison, whence Marion contrives to bribe his escape, and they fly together in disguise, among a company of strolling actors. We are now introduced to an old nobleman, the uncle of Saverny, who, in great distress of mind, is about to celebrate his beloved nephew's obsequies ; Saverny himself having, with one of

his brother officers, escorted an empty bier to the chateau, which bier was supposed to contain his body. Of course, he is so disguised as not to be recognised by his worthy uncle, and trusts to time to reconcile the old gentleman to the cheat, when the Cardinal's displeasure at the duel shall be over, and the search everywhere making for Didier, the only person concerned who was supposed to survive, has ceased. At this very chateau is staying an emissary of Richelieu, who is on the look out for the fugitive Didier. Here he meets young Saverny, who knows nothing of him, and, under favor of his disguise, discusses the matter of the duel in all coolness with him ; and hither, as ill luck would have it, come the Thespians, and with them Marion and Didier. Among these strolling players, who are allowed to take up their quarters in one of the out-houses of the chateau, Saverny sees and recognises Marion, and, much puzzled at the circumstance of her appearing there, communicates it to Laffemas, Richelieu's emissary, who was on the point of leaving the chateau, to pursue his quest of the unfortunate Didier. This, however, fatally alters his purpose. He insists upon seeing the whole troop, and, to the agony of Marion, and the consternation of poor Saverny, who was unaware of the mischief he was causing, presently discovers the sham actor among the real mimes, and claims Didier as his prisoner. But Saverny had inflicted a far deeper wound upon his former rival. In indicating Marion to Laffemas, the young gallant had shown a picture of her, which he wore round his neck, and which Didier, then standing in the back-ground, had also seen. This leads to a dialogue between them, in which Saverny discloses to Didier the real character of Marion, of which he had supposed him aware. The enthusiast and the lover is at once precipitated from his high and holy faith, and beholds, in the object of his deep and pure affection, a disgraced and degraded being. We will translate the scene. We should premise, that, at the very opening of the play, Didier, in a street affray at night, is the means of saving Saverny's life. After a few lines of mere explanation, in which they account to each other, Didier, for not being, as Saverny thought him, in prison ; and Saverny, for not being, as Didier thought him, dead, in consequence of their duel ; Saverny, whose quarrel with him was the mere result of high spirits, and a few aristocratic airs on his own part, professes an honest regard for him, rejoices that

they have both escaped so well the affair of the duel, and, remembering only that at their first meeting Didier had saved his life, asks him in return what he can do for him.

“ DIDIER.

Give me that woman's picture which you wear.

(Saverny gives it to him ; he looks bitterly at it.)

Yes, 't is her eye, her brow, her snowy neck,
And oh ! her heavenly look ; — 't is very like !

SAVERNY.

D' ye think so ?

DIDIER.

Tell me, was it then for you
She had this picture taken ?

SAVERNY *(nods, then bowing to Didier).*

It's your turn.

You are the loved, the chosen among many,
The happy fellow.

DIDIER.

Am I not most happy !

SAVERNY.

I wish you joy ! — faith, she's an honest wench.
Her lovers are all men of family.
The sort of mistress that one may be proud of.
'T is a good boast, too, and tells prettily
'To have it said of one, — ' He's Marion's lover.'

(Didier offers to return the picture ; he declines receiving it.)

No, keep the miniature ; — she's yours, and so
Her picture comes to you of right.

DIDIER.

I thank you.

(He puts the picture in his bosom.)

SAVERNY.

That Spanish dress becomes her wonderfully.
And so you're my successor ! — pretty much
As Louis succeeds Pharamond, indeed ;
For I was jilted for the two Brissacs,

Yes, faith, the two ; — why even the Cardinal,
 And then D'Effiat, and then the three St. Memes,
 And the four Argenteaux ; — oh, in her heart,
 You 'll be in the very best of company ;
 A little crowded, — that 's a trifle.

DIDIER (*aside*).

Horror !

SAVERNY.

But pray inform me now, — to tell you plainly,
 'T is here believed that I am dead. To-morrow,
 I 'm to be buried. As for you, I take it,
 You found some cunning way to cheat your gaolers ;
 Marion has opened all the gates for you ;
 Why your adventures must make up a history.

DIDIER.

Yes, a strange history.

SAVERNY.

For your sake, doubtless,
 She smiled upon some archer of the guard.

DIDIER (*with extreme vehemence*).

God's thunder ! dare you think it !

SAVERNY.

Well, what then ?

What, jealous ? — why the thing 's fantastical.
 Jealous of whom ? of Marion de Lorme !
 Poor wench ! pray now read her no homilies.

DIDIER.

Fear not. (*Aside.*) Oh God ! this angel was a devil ! ”

We have quoted this scene, in order to give M. Hugo's own account of his heroine ; we now proceed with the story. Didier, disgusted alike with his mistress and his life, surrenders himself at once to Laffemas, and is about to be dragged to prison, when Saverny, thinking by that means to rescue him, comes forward, takes off his disguise, and avows himself alive, and not dead, to the infinite ecstasy of his poor old uncle, and the satisfaction of all present. But the malicious agent of the Cardinal's sanguinary will, instantly arrests him also, as guilty, since not dead ; and both the young men are carried to prison, to await the fulfil-

ment of the sentence, which Richelieu's edict had proclaimed against duelling, that is, death.

The fourth act, which we should imagine tolerably dull on the stage, gives a clever, but rather exaggerated picture of the interior of the palace, and the state of slavery in which Louis the Thirteenth was kept by the ambitious and cruel Cardinal. Saverny's old uncle and Marion de Lorme by turns appear as supplicants for the duellists, and are both refused; the King not daring to reverse the Cardinal's sentence, though much inclined to do so. This inclination is carried to a climax, by the information given him by his sister, (who, by the by, is a most lugubrious personage,) that both the young men were expert falconers; the King, among other graver lamentations, deploring the disuse into which the sport of hawking is falling. The jester takes advantage of his Majesty's merciful mood, presses the matter in every point of view, plays by turns upon his pride, his pity, his conscience, and his love of hawking, and finally, after many misgivings, obtains from the King the full pardon of both the young men, which he delivers to Marion.

In the fifth act we have the prison, and its inmates, the two young men. Drawn together by their common misfortune, their sympathy and tenderness for each other are very touching, and the contrast between the light-hearted kindness of Saverny, and the solemn and sad meditations of the heart-broken Didier, is exceedingly effective and affecting.

The old Marquis de Nangis (Saverny's uncle) bribes one of the gaolers to assist his nephew's escape; but, when the latter finds that his companion is not to be rescued with him, he rejects the offer, and remains with Didier to abide the issue. At this moment, Marion arrives at the prison gate, and, showing the King's pass, is refused admittance. At the same instant Laffemas appears, and, showing a pass from the Cardinal, the door flies open to him. Marion eagerly displays to him the pardon which she holds; and he unrolls before her eyes the *revocation* of it, signed by the King, a few hours after. Her despair then knows no bounds, and the wretch Laffemas takes advantage of it, to offer her as the terms of her lover's rescue, the same alternative which Angelo proposes to Isabel, in "Measure for Measure"; of course the reader's own mind will naturally suggest the wide difference between the women, as making all the differ-

ence in the transaction. However, it is consented to by Marion, who at length thus obtains access to her lover. She brings him a disguise, and offers him the means of escape ; these, however, he rejects, charging her with having deceived and betrayed him. While she entreats and he reproaches, the gun is fired which announces the arrival of the Cardinal to witness the execution. All flight is of course impossible now. We give the parting of Didier and Marion.

“ DIDIER (*to Saverny*).

My brother, 't is for me you 're sacrificed,
Let us embrace !

MARION (*rushing towards him*).

He does not embrace me !

Didier, embrace me too !

DIDIER (*pointing to Saverny*).

This is my friend, Madam.

MARION (*wringing her hands*).

Oh ! hardly do you deal with the poor woman,
Who, on her knees, of King and Judge implored
Your pardon, and now begs of you her own.

DIDIER (*about to leave her, suddenly exclaims*).

My heart is bursting ! No, no, 't is impossible
With a calm brow to bear this agony.
Oh too much loved ! thus to be left for ever,
Come to my arms ! death is at hand, — I love thee,
'T is joy unspeakable once more to tell thee so !

MARION.

Didier !

DIDIER.

Come, thou poor lost one ! Speak, all of you,
Say, is there one amongst you, who could now
Shut close his arms from an unfortunate,
Whose very soul was given up to him ?
Oh, I have wronged thee ! Shall I die before thee
Unpitying, unpardoning ? Oh, hear me !
Among all women, and all those who hear me,
In their own hearts approve of what I say ;
She whom I love, she with whom dwells my faith,
She whom I worship, it is thou, dear, thou !
For thou to me hast been most kind and gentle.
Hear me ; my knot of life is now untied ;
I am about to die, and all things show

In their true light and color to my eyes.
'T was thy exceeding love that made thee blind me,
And in this hour thy sin is surely expiated.
Ah ! by thy mother, in thy cradle left,
Thou wert perchance, like me, a thing forsaken ;
While yet a child, thy innocence was sold
By others ; — lift thy forehead from the dust !
Bear witness all ; now, in this hour, when life
Fades like a shadow, and the lips are true, —
In this dark hour, my foot upon that scaffold
Which innocent blood doth make a holy place,
Mary, angel of heaven ! lost on earth,
My love, my wife, oh hearken to me, Mary !
By that great God, towards whom death hurries me,
I do forgive thee ! ”

Upon Marion's bitter lamentations, he consoles her by showing her how irrevocably his happiness was already lost ; and concludes by requesting this “ angel of heaven, his love, and wife,” to remember him, when some other more fortunate lover shall approach her ; and here the tenderness and pathos of the scene are again turned into a mockery, by this allusion to the woman's degraded character and situation. We strongly recommend our readers to contrast this scene with the conclusion of Heywood's “ Woman killed with Kindness ” ; in which an unfaithful wife, who is dying of the shame and sorrow of her sin, receives her husband's pardon. The old playwrights were not mealy-mouthed in the use of language ; but we cannot help thinking, that, in matters of morality, they beat the modern dramatists hollow.

That a woman, who has been seduced from virtue, and forfeited her honor, should excite our commiseration, our sympathy, and even, under some aspects, our admiration, is not impossible. But that a woman whose whole life has been a course of heartless and shameless profligacy should do so, is totally impossible. For a sin of passion there may be some circumstances, if not of excuse, at least of attenuation, to be found. But from a series of venal prostitutions, committed boldly in the world's eye, and gloried in with a spirit of the most abandoned levity, our moral sense, our human sympathies, our very physical nature, revolts in total disgust. A woman who has led such a life may be a fitting object for the divine and pardoning spirit of Christian charity ; but she is not a fitting subject for an artist to present to our senses, our

judgments, or our hearts, for admiration, approbation, or affection. The woman taken in adultery, and she "who was a sinner," found mercy at the feet of the most merciful; — and surely they should meet forbearance in the judgments of their fellow sinners. But, when the latter is brought before us, tricked up in all the vile and unchaste adornments of a courtesan of the most licentious court of Europe, our insulted sense of right at once turns from such an appeal, and points to the only aspect under which such an one can claim our sympathy. Again, to have made this woman the object of the love of such a man as Didier, is what we will not forgive M. Hugo for. Such things have been, it is true; but they were occasions for wise men's wonder, and good men's sorrow; strange mysteries of infatuation, showing too painfully the weakness of human nature, and casting down from its high altar that holy worship, pure and deep affection.

We now come to the last of this series of M. Hugo's plays, *Le Roi s'amuse*; — and what shall we say to that? That, in our opinion, it is alike unfit to be exhibited or read; an absurd, immoral, and indecent composition. We hardly know by what part to take up this monstrosity, so as best to display it to our readers, and least to offend them by the sight. M. Hugo is a radical; and truly he delineates kings with the spirit of one. Francis the First, the hero of the cloth of gold, the conqueror of Marignan, the knight of Bayard's dubbing, the patron of Marot and Ronsard, the friend of Leonardo da Vinci, the rival of Charles of Spain, is brought before us, not in any of the finer aspects of his reign and character, but a heartless, worthless, witless debauchee. His jester, Triboulet, the hero of the piece, is a species of hump-backed Mephistophiles, who passes his life in eating his heart, (a right bitter bit, we should think,) insulting the nobles of the court, and pandering to the King. The first act is a mere sketch of the court, and consists of the dissolute discourses of the courtiers, mixed with the all-pervading gall of Triboulet's satire, whom they all hate and fear. It terminates, however, by the appearance of one M. de St. Vallier, father of the King's celebrated mistress, Diane de Poitiers, who comes to reproach Francis with the seduction of his daughter, and, being scoffed at by the King and the King's fool, curses them both most emphatically, and departs. Besides, however, a very bad

temper, Triboulet has a very pretty daughter, whom he keeps hermetically sealed from sight and speech of man, as he supposes ; yet who, nevertheless, is seen by the King, who visits her in the disguise of a student, and, without suspecting her relationship to the jester, obtains her affections. Some of the courtiers have detected Triboulet in his stolen evening visits to his daughter, and, supposing them paid to a mistress, determine, in order to torment him, to carry her off ; which they effect, and bear Blanche, (the name of the girl,) to the palace, where she finds herself in the presence of the King, in whom she recognises her lowly lover, and who basely takes advantage of her terror, and the circumstances which have thus delivered her into his hands. At this time, Triboulet, phrensied with the loss of his child, which he has just discovered, reaches the palace, where his vain attempts to conceal his agony afford much mirth to the courtiers by whom he is surrounded. His attention is directed to the King's apartment, where he becomes convinced Blanche is detained, and, rushing in despair against the door, he calls aloud upon his child. The amazement of the nobles at this discovery is extreme ; and, while they in vain endeavour to oppose the frantic father, Blanche herself escapes from the inner room, and falls into his arms. A scene of infinite anguish follows between the father and the child, which will remind the German scholar of the scene between Verrina and his daughter in Schiller's noble play of "Fiesco." From this time, the jester's soul is filled but with one desire, that of revenge. For a long while he is withheld from his purpose, by the love which he finds Blanche bears to her betrayer ; but, at length, he determines to bring her to his views by awakening her jealousy. He conveys her to the vicinity of a house inhabited by a ruffian street-stabber, and an abandoned woman, his sister. To this resort of infamy comes Francis ; and Blanche is at once tortured and disgusted, by beholding her lover lavish upon another, and such an one, the caresses and terms of endearment which he had bestowed upon her. With a withered heart, the poor girl turns from her post of observation, and tells her father, who himself has brought her there, to do his pleasure. He immediately sends her away, bidding her to disguise herself in boy's clothes, and leave the town. As soon as she is gone, he calls out of the hovel the assassin, and, tendering him the usual reward, bids him murder

Francis, who of course is there incognito. He promises to return himself and fetch the body, which he directs should be tied up in a sack. He then retires, to leave the cut-throat to his work ; the King falls asleep in an upper room of the house, and the girl and her brother remain alone, the latter sharpening his knife methodically for his job, and the former supplicating a reprieve for her visitor, whose good looks and gallantry have won her heart. A dismal storm rages without ; night is fallen, and poor Blanche, in her boy's clothes, comes stealing back to see what has become of her perfidious lover. She resumes the situation from which she before had observed what was passing in the house, and overhears the horrible dialogue between the murderer and his sister. The knife is sharpened, and he is about to ascend to the garret, (for it is nothing else,) where Francis lies asleep. Maguelonne implores him to have mercy ; upon which he tells her that he expects a man back, who is to pay him for the murder, and also fetch away the body, and that therefore the deed must be done. All the mitigation which the girl's entreaties obtain of this sentence is, that if, before the appointed time, any one else should come to the house, a thing rendered improbable by the late hour and fearful night, he shall be substituted for the King ; the bravo taking it for granted, that one dead body is just as good as another, and that it cannot matter much whom he delivers, tied up in a sack, to Triboulet when he returns. Poor Blanche hears all this ; she sees the horrid face and form of the ruffian, the dismal hole where these atrocities are perpetrated, the keen and glittering knife ready for its bloody task ; but, urged on by her love for Francis, she devotes herself, and strikes upon the door. The details of the scene are here terrible. She sees the murderer pass his knife over the whet-stone, and conceal himself behind the door, ready to strike her as she enters. Her youth, her love, her father, her God, by turns seize hold of her mind, and half draw her from her purpose. Chilled through with the bitter cold rain, and the fearful anticipation of being mangled and hacked to death, she falters, yet again strikes the door ; she falls on her knees, forgiving and imploring forgiveness, and knocks again ; the door is opened, and the curtain falls as the knife is lifted over her. The end is short ; we wish it had been shorter ; the bloody bombast of Titus Andronicus is a joke to it. Triboulet returns, pays the price, and receives

the sack ; and, sending away the cut-throat, remains alone in the storm and the night, to enjoy the consciousness of his revenge. He apostrophizes the dead body with every insult and reproach, treads upon it, buffets it, and having exhausted his rage and hatred, is dragging it to the river ; when the door of the hovel opens, Francis escapes from it, crosses the stage, singing his famous distich,

“ Souvent femme varie,
Bien fol est qui s'y fie,”

and disappears in the darkness among the streets. Triboulet, terrified and enraged, drags the sack again from the brink of the river, and tears it open. But the darkness of the night prevents his seeing the face ; he sits down on the ground beside the body, and waits for the next flash of lightning. It glares upon the corpse, and he recognises his child.

We have neither leisure nor inclination to make more than one extract from this “ bloody farce without salt or savor.” We take it from one of Triboulet’s scenes with his daughter, the only ones that are not positively offensive in the piece.

“ TRIBOULET.

My child ! Oh, clasp thy arms about my neck !
Lie on my heart ! once more with thee life smiles,
My burthen ’s gone, I ’m blest, I breathe again.
Thou ’rt fairer every day ! say, lack’st thou aught ?
Say, art thou happy here ? kiss me once more.

BLANCHE.

How good you are, dear father !

TRIBOULET.

No, I love thee,

That ’s all. Oh, art thou not my life, my blood ?
Oh God ! what would become of me without thee !

BLANCHE.

You sigh, you have some heavy secret sorrows ;
Tell them to your poor child, father ; alas !
I do not even know my family.

TRIBOULET.

You have none.

BLANCHE.

But I do not know your name.

TRIBOULET.

What matters it ?

BLANCHE.

Our neighbours in the village,
Where I was living when you came to fetch me,
Thought that I was an orphan, ere they saw you.

TRIBOULET.

I should have left you there ; it had been wiser ;
But 't was impossible longer to live
Without one human heart to feel for me.

BLANCHE.

Since you will tell me nothing of yourself——

TRIBOULET.

You never go abroad ?

BLANCHE.

'T is now two months
I have been here, and in that space eight times
Have I been out to church, — no oftener.

TRIBOULET.

Good.

BLANCHE.

Father, tell me something of my mother !

TRIBOULET.

Oh, waken not that bitter recollection,
Nor to my thoughts recall, that once I found
A woman, to all women most unlike ;
Who, in this world, where spirits never mate,
Seeing me lonely, helpless, poor, and hated,
E'en for my misery pitied me, and loved me.
She died, and carried to her grave with her
The holy secret of her faithful love ;
That love which flashed like lightning over me,
A ray of heaven, that shone down to my hell.
O, may the earth, still ready to receive us,
Lie gently on that breast, which was my pillow.
Thou 'rt all I have, thank God that I have thee !

BLANCHE.

Oh, how you weep, how cruelly you suffer !
I cannot bear to see you weep thus, father.

TRIBOULET.

What wouldst thou say, if thou couldst hear me laugh ?

BLANCHE.

Oh, father, let me know at least your name,
Pour all your sorrows in my bosom.

TRIBOULET.

No ;

Why should I speak my name ? I am thy father.
 Hear me ; away from here I may be hated,
 Despised, accursed ; what is my name to thee ?
 Here, and to thee, in this one holy spot,
 I will be nothing but a father, Blanche,
 A dear and honored father.

BLANCHE.

And so you are.

TRIBOULET.

Beats there elsewhere one heart that answers mine ?
 I love thee as I hate all things beside.
 Sit by me ; come, come, let us speak of that.
 Say, dost thou love thy father ? Wherefore should we,
 When thus together hand in hand we sit,
 Speak, think, of any other earthly thing ?
 My child ! oh, only blessing Heaven allows me !
 Others have parents, brothers, kinsmen, friends,
 A wife, a husband, vassals, followers,
 Ancestors, and allies, or many children ;
 I have but thee, thee only. Some are rich ;
 Thou art my treasure, thou art all my riches.
 And some believe in God ; and I believe
 In nothing but thy soul. Others have youth,
 And woman's love, and pride, and grace, and health ;
 Others are beautiful ; thou art my beauty,
 Thou art my home, my country, and my kin,
 My wife, my mother, sister, friend, and child,
 My bliss, my wealth, my worship, and my law,
 My Universe ! — Oh, by all other things
 My soul is tortured. If I should ever lose thee —
 Horrible thought ! I cannot utter it.
 Smile, for thy smile is like thy mother's smiling.
 She, too, was fair ; you have a trick like her,
 Of passing oft your hand athwart your brow
 As though to wipe it. Innocence still loves
 A brow unclouded and an azure eye.
 To me thou seem'st clothed in a holy halo ;
 My soul beholds thy soul through thy fair body ;
 E'en when my eyes are shut, I see thee still ;
 Thou art my daylight, and sometimes I wish
 That Heaven had made me blind, that thou might'st be
 The sun, that lighted up the world for me."

Blanche is a very beautiful flower in the middle of all these rank weeds ; but M. Hugo sins as much in bringing her into contact with such a thing as he makes Francis, as in linking Didier to Marion de Lorme. These are things, M. Hugo, that — *Shakspeare* never did. Imogen, in her holy sleep, though looked upon by the unholiest eyes, remains pure as unspotted snow ; and Desdemona, though spoken of in words of coarse ribaldry, that make one shudder, presents no image to our heart but that of immaculate innocence. But then, *Shakspeare* never drew their heavenly spirits into companionship with that which was base ; their devoted affections were nobly bestowed upon noble objects, and, however surrounded by vile accidents their mortal frames might be, their souls held fellowship with that which was chaste and holy alone ; the very spirit of purity dwelt within them, and their perfect and divine modesty and dignity of nature encircle them as with a spell, round which all foul things fall harmless. If we were Sancho Panza, we should say to M. Hugo, touching these unnatural alliances of excellence and infamy, “ Like will to like ; ” — “ Birds of a feather flock together ; ” — “ There is no touching pitch without being defiled,” &c.

Le Roi s’amuse has been followed by several other dramatic compositions, some yet more abhorrent to good taste, as *La Tour de Nesle*, and *Lucrèce Borgia* ; — others, again, of less revolting detail and incident, as *Marie Tudor*, and the last, *Angelo, Tyran de Padoue* ; but all alike devoid of moral truth and sane feeling. It is with infinite regret that we behold talents, such as those of M. Hugo, exerted to scatter baneful influences as far as his works are known. It is sometimes lamented, that, in translations, some measure of the original spirit of a work must evaporate. Far from deploring that his compositions cannot reach these shores in all their pristine power of evil, we wish, that, instead of modified, they might be utterly lost, in the transmutation from French to our own language. We desire no such additions to our libraries. If we must borrow from foreign sources, we will draw from those that are pure ; and we devoutly hope, that, far from obtaining imitators on this side the Atlantic, M. Hugo’s works may be held as *models to be avoided* by all our younger brothers of the pen. If we have yet no literature, God forbid, that any that we may hereafter own should rise upon so rotten a foundation.

We are heartily sorry for the effect, which M. Hugo's works have produced on the minds of his own countrymen. The French stage has become a disgrace to any Christian and civilized people ; and, as for those glorious dreams of liberty in which M. Hugo and his fellow-radicals indulge for France, they are utterly fantastical, and must remain so, while the spirit of their country is such as to produce and applaud works like his.

The noble growth of free institutions does not spring from a licentious and immoral soil. They are not the result of idle declamation, but the fruit of steadfast purpose. They are not the sudden offspring of public paroxysms, but the slowly ripened and widely gathered harvest of individual principle.

ART. VII. — *Letters auxiliary to the History of Modern Polite Literature in Germany*. By HEINRICH HEINE. Translated from the German by G. W. HAVEN. Boston : James Munroe and Company. 1836.

WHATEVER we may think of the moral character, motives, and intentions of the author of this book, it claims attention as exhibiting the views and opinions of a man of uncommon talent on a subject, which cannot but be interesting to every person of liberal education, — the condition of German literature during the last forty or fifty years. The literature of Germany of this period, like that of France, England, and Italy, is one of the causes as well as effects of the momentous changes wrought, within that short time, in the condition of Europe, and, in fact, of the civilized world. Indeed, if we wished to mention one of the most characteristic features of this time, it would be the immediate and reciprocal relation between literature and literary men on the one hand, and the political changes of the time on the other ; and this not only in those departments of literature, which, being of a more practical character, are nearly connected with, and immediately affected by political changes, but even in those which might be, and for ages have been, considered independent of these external influences. Nor ought we to be surprised at this. The tremendous blows, which, from the commencement of